

to remember is that all Keats's work was done in three or four years, with small preparation, and that, dying at twenty-five, he left us a body of poetry which will always be one of our most cherished possessions. He is often compared with "the marvelous boy" Chatterton, whom he greatly admired, and to whose memory he dedicated his *Endymion*; but though both died young, Chatterton was but a child, while Keats was in all respects a man. It is idle to prophesy what he might have done, had he been granted a Tennyson's long life and scholarly training. At twenty-five his work was as mature as was Tennyson's at fifty, though the maturity suggests the too rapid growth of a tropical plant which under the warm rains and the flood of sunlight leaps into life, grows, blooms in a day, and dies.

As we have stated, Keats's work was bitterly and unjustly condemned by the critics of his day. He belonged to what was derisively called the cockney school of poetry, of which Leigh Hunt was chief, and Proctor and Beddoes were fellow-workmen. Not even from Wordsworth and Byron, who were ready enough to recommend far less gifted writers, did Keats receive the slightest encouragement. Like young Lochinvar, "he rode all unarmed and he rode all alone." Shelley, with his sincerity and generosity, was the first to recognize the young genius, and in his noble *Adonais* — written, alas, like most of our tributes, when the subject of our praise is dead — he spoke the first true word of appreciation, and placed Keats, where he unquestionably belongs, among our greatest poets. The fame denied him in his sad life was granted freely after his death. Most fitly does he close the list of poets of the romantic revival, because in many respects he was the best workman of them all. He seems to have studied words more carefully than did his contemporaries, and so his poetic expression, or the harmony of word and thought, is generally more perfect than theirs. More than any other he lived for poetry, as the noblest of the arts. More than any other

he emphasized beauty, because to him, as shown by his "Grecian Urn," beauty and truth were one and inseparable. And he enriched the whole romantic movement by adding to its interest in common life the spirit, rather than the letter, of the classics and of Elizabethan poetry. For these reasons Keats is, like Spenser, a poet's poet; his work profoundly influenced Tennyson and, indeed, most of the poets of the present era.

II. PROSE WRITERS OF THE ROMANTIC PERIOD

Aside from the splendid work of the novel writers — Walter Scott, whom we have considered, and Jane Austen, to whom we shall presently return — the early nineteenth century is remarkable for the development of a new and valuable type of critical prose writing. If we except the isolated work of Dryden and of Addison, it is safe to say that literary criticism, in its modern sense, was hardly known in England until about the year 1825. Such criticism as existed seems to us now to have been largely the result of personal opinion or prejudice. Indeed we could hardly expect anything else before some systematic study of our literature as a whole had been attempted. In one age a poem was called good or bad according as it followed or ran counter to so-called classic rules; in another we have the dogmatism of Dr. Johnson; in a third the personal judgment of Lockhart and the editors of the *Edinburgh Review* and the *Quarterly*, who so violently abused Keats and the Lake poets in the name of criticism. Early in the nineteenth century there arose a new school of criticism which was guided by knowledge of literature, on the one hand, and by what one might call the fear of God on the other. The latter element showed itself in a profound human sympathy, — the essence of the romantic movement, — and its importance was summed up by De Quincey when he said, "Not to sympathize is not to understand." These new critics, with abundant reverence for past masters, could still lay aside the dogmatism and prejudice

Literary
Criticism

which marked Johnson and the magazine editors, and read sympathetically the work of a new author, with the sole idea of finding what he had contributed, or tried to contribute, to the magnificent total of our literature. Coleridge, Hunt, Hazlitt, Lamb, and De Quincey were the leaders in this new and immensely important development; and we must not forget the importance of the new periodicals, like the *London Magazine*, founded in 1820, in which Lamb, De Quincey, and Carlyle found their first real encouragement.

Of Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* and his *Lectures on Shakespeare* we have already spoken. Leigh Hunt (1784–
Hunt and Hazlitt 1859) wrote continuously for more than thirty years, as editor and essayist; and his chief object seems to have been to make good literature known and appreciated. William Hazlitt (1778–1830), in a long series of lectures and essays, treated all reading as a kind of romantic journey into new and pleasant countries. To his work largely, with that of Lamb, was due the new interest in Elizabethan literature, which so strongly influenced Keats's last and best volume of poetry. For those interested in the art of criticism, and in the appreciation of literature, both Hunt and Hazlitt will well repay study; but we must pass over their work to consider the larger literary interest of Lamb and De Quincey, who were not simply critics of other men's labor, but who also produced some delightful work of their own, which the world has carefully put away among the "things worthy to be remembered."

CHARLES LAMB (1775–1834)

In Lamb and Wordsworth we have two widely different views of the romantic movement; one shows the influence of nature and solitude, the other of society. Lamb was a lifelong friend of Coleridge, and an admirer and defender of the poetic creed of Wordsworth; but while the latter lived apart from men, content with nature and with reading an occasional

moral lesson to society, Lamb was born and lived in the midst of the London streets. The city crowd, with its pleasures and occupations, its endless little comedies and tragedies, alone interested him. According to his own account, when he paused in the crowded street tears would spring to his eyes,—tears of pure pleasure at the abundance of so much good life; and when he wrote, he simply interpreted that crowded human life of joy and sorrow, as Wordsworth interpreted the woods and waters, without any desire to change or to reform them. He has given us the best pictures we possess of Coleridge, Hazlitt, Landor, Hood, Cowden Clarke, and many more of the interesting men and women of his age; and it is due to his insight and sympathy that the life of those far-off days seems almost as real to us as if we ourselves remembered it. Of all our English essayists he is the most lovable; partly because of his delicate, old-fashioned style and humor, but more because of that cheery and heroic struggle against misfortune which shines like a subdued light in all his writings.

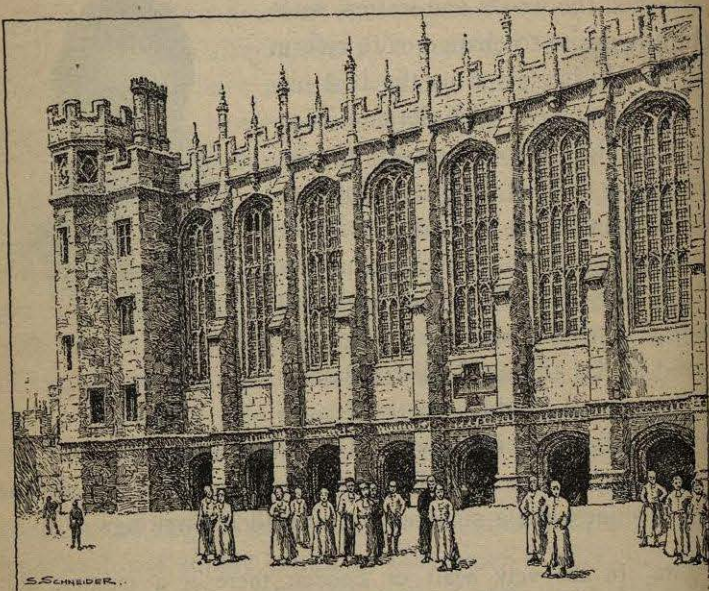


CHARLES LAMB

Life. In the very heart of London there is a curious, old-fashioned place known as the Temple,—an enormous, rambling, apparently forgotten structure, dusty and still, in the midst of the endless roar of the city streets. Originally it was a chapter house of the Knights Templars, and so suggests to us the spirit of the Crusades and of the Middle Ages; but now the building is given over almost entirely to the offices and lodgings of London lawyers. It is this queer old place which, more than all others, is associated with the name of Charles Lamb. "I was born," he says, "and passed the first seven years of my life in the Temple. Its gardens, its halls, its fountain, its river . . . these are my oldest recollections." He was the son of a poor clerk, or rather servant, of one of the barristers, and was the youngest of seven children, only three of

whom survived infancy. Of these three, John, the elder, was apparently a selfish creature, who took no part in the heroic struggle of his brother and sister. At seven years, Charles was sent to the famous "Bluecoat" charity school of Christ's Hospital. Here he remained seven years; and here he formed his lifelong friendship for another poor, neglected boy, whom the world remembers as Coleridge.¹

When only fourteen years old, Lamb left the charity school and was soon at work as a clerk in the South Sea House. Two years later he became a clerk in the famous India House, where he worked



CHRIST'S HOSPITAL, LONDON

steadily for thirty-three years, with the exception of six weeks, in the winter of 1795-1796, spent within the walls of an asylum. In 1796 Lamb's sister Mary, who was as talented and remarkable as Lamb himself, went violently insane and killed her own mother. For a long time after this appalling tragedy she was in an asylum at Hoxton; then Lamb, in 1797, brought her to his own little house, and for the remainder of his life cared for her with a tenderness and devotion which furnishes one of the most beautiful pages in our literary history. At times the malady would return to Mary, giving

¹ See "Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago," in *Essays of Elia*.

sure warning of its terrible approach; and then brother and sister might be seen walking silently, hand in hand, to the gates of the asylum, their cheeks wet with tears. One must remember this, as well as Lamb's humble lodgings and the drudgery of his daily work in the big commercial house, if he would appreciate the pathos of "The Old Familiar Faces," or the heroism which shines through the most human and the most delightful essays in our language.

When Lamb was fifty years of age the East India Company, led partly by his literary fame following his first *Essays of Elia*, and partly by his thirty-three years of faithful service, granted him a comfortable pension; and happy as a boy turned loose from school he left India House forever to give himself up to literary work.¹ He wrote to Wordsworth, in April, 1825, "I came home *forever* on Tuesday of last week — it was like passing from life into eternity." Curiously enough Lamb seems to lose power after his release from drudgery, and his last essays, published in 1833, lack something of the grace and charm of his earlier work. He died at Edmonton in 1834; and his gifted sister Mary sank rapidly into the gulf from which his strength and gentleness had so long held her back. No literary man was ever more loved and honored by a rare circle of friends; and all who knew him bear witness to the simplicity and goodness which any reader may find for himself between the lines of his essays.

Works. The works of Lamb divide themselves naturally into three periods. First, there are his early literary efforts, including the poems signed "C. L." in Coleridge's *Poems on Various Subjects* (1796); his romance *Rosamund Gray* (1798); his poetical drama *John Woodvil* (1802); and various other immature works in prose and poetry. This period comes to an end in 1803, when he gave up his newspaper work, especially the contribution of six jokes, puns, and squibs daily to the *Morning Post* at sixpence apiece. The second period was given largely to literary criticism; and the *Tales from Shakespeare* (1807) — written by Charles and Mary Lamb, the former reproducing the tragedies, and the latter the comedies — may be regarded as his first successful literary venture.

¹ See *Essays of Elia*, "The Superannuated Man."

The book was written primarily for children; but so thoroughly had brother and sister steeped themselves in the literature of the Elizabethan period that young and old alike were delighted with this new version of Shakespeare's stories, and the *Tales* are still regarded as the best of their kind in our literature. In 1808 appeared his *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets Contemporary with Shakespeare*. This carried out the splendid critical work of Coleridge, and was the most noticeable influence in developing the poetic qualities of Keats, as shown in his last volume.

The third period includes Lamb's criticisms of life, which are gathered together in his *Essays of Elia* (1823), and his *Essays of Elia* *Last Essays of Elia*, which were published ten years later. These famous essays began in 1820 with the appearance of the new *London Magazine*,¹ and were continued for many years, such subjects as the "Dissertation on Roast Pig," "Old China," "Praise of Chimney Sweepers," "Imperfect Sympathies," "A Chapter on Ears," "Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist," "Mackery End," "Grace Before Meat," "Dream Children," and many others being chosen apparently at random, but all leading to a delightful interpretation of the life of London, as it appeared to a quiet little man who walked unnoticed through its crowded streets. In the first and last essays which we have mentioned, "Dissertation on Roast Pig" and "Dream Children," we have the extremes of Lamb's humor and pathos.

The style of all these essays is gentle, old-fashioned, irresistibly attractive. Lamb was especially fond of old writers, and borrowed unconsciously from the style of Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* and from Browne's *Religio Medici* and from the early English dramatists. But this style had become a part of Lamb by long reading, and

¹ In the first essay, "The South Sea House," Lamb assumed as a joke the name of a former clerk, Elia. Other essays followed, and the name was retained when several successful essays were published in book form, in 1823. In these essays "Elia" is Lamb himself, and "Cousin Bridget" is his sister Mary.

he was apparently unable to express his new thought without using their old quaint expressions. Though these essays are all criticisms or appreciations of the life of his age, they are all intensely personal. In other words, they are an excellent picture of Lamb and of humanity. Without a trace of vanity or self-assertion, Lamb begins with himself, with some purely personal mood or experience, and from this he leads the reader to see life and literature as he saw it. It is this wonderful combination of personal and universal interests, together with Lamb's rare old style and quaint humor, which make the essays remarkable. They continue the best tradition of Addison and Steele, our first great essayists; but their sympathies are broader and deeper, and their humor more delicious, than any which preceded them.

THOMAS DE QUINCEY (1785-1859)

In De Quincey the romantic element is even more strongly developed than in Lamb, not only in his critical work, but also in his erratic and imaginative life. He was profoundly educated, even more so than Coleridge, and was one of the keenest intellects of the age; yet his wonderful intellect seems always subordinate to his passion for dreaming. Like Lamb, he was a friend and associate of the Lake poets, making his headquarters in Wordsworth's old cottage at Grasmere for nearly twenty years. Here the resemblance ceases, and a marked contrast begins. As a man, Lamb is the most human and lovable of all our essayists; while De Quincey is the most uncanny and incomprehensible. Lamb's modest works breathe the two essential qualities of sympathy and humor; the greater number of De Quincey's essays, while possessing more or less of both these qualities, are characterized chiefly by their brilliant style. Life, as seen through De Quincey's eyes, is nebulous and chaotic, and there is a suspicion of the fabulous in all that he wrote. Even in *The Revolt of the Tartars* the romantic element is uppermost, and

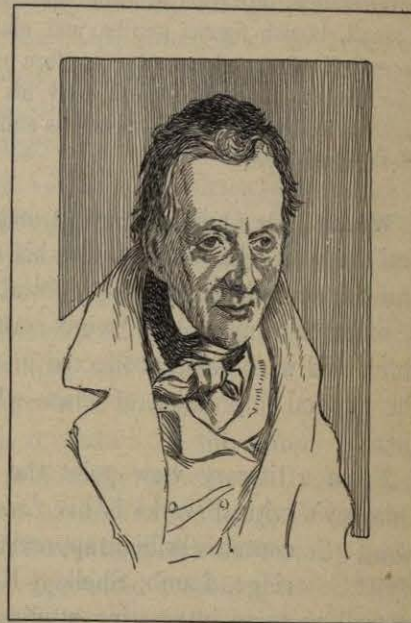
in much of De Quincey's prose the element of unreality is more noticeable than in Shelley's poetry. Of his subject-matter, his facts, ideas, and criticisms, we are generally suspicious; but of his style, sometimes stately and sometimes headlong, now gorgeous as an Oriental dream, now musical as Keats's *Endymion*, and always, even in the most violent contrasts, showing a harmony between the idea and the expression such as no other English writer, with the possible exception of Newman, has ever rivaled,—say what you will of the marvelous brilliancy of De Quincey's style, you have still only half expressed the truth. It is the style alone which makes these essays immortal.

Life. De Quincey was born in Manchester in 1785. In neither his father, who was a prosperous merchant, nor his mother, who was a quiet, unsympathetic woman, do we see any suggestion of the son's almost uncanny genius. As a child he was given to dreams, more vivid and intense but less beautiful than those of the young Blake, to whom he bears a strong resemblance. In the grammar school at Bath he displayed astonishing ability, and acquired Greek and Latin with a rapidity that frightened his slow tutors. At fifteen he not only read Greek, but spoke it fluently; and one of his astounded teachers remarked, "That boy could harangue an Athenian mob better than you or I could address an English one." From the grammar school at Manchester, whither he was sent in 1800, he soon ran away, finding the instruction far below his abilities, and the rough life absolutely intolerable to his sensitive nature. An uncle, just home from India, interceded for the boy lest he be sent back to the school, which he hated; and with an allowance of a guinea a week he started a career of vagrancy, much like that of Goldsmith, living on the open hills, in the huts of shepherds and charcoal burners, in the tents of gypsies, wherever fancy led him. His fear of the Manchester school finally led him to run away to London, where, without money or friends, his life was even more extraordinary than his gypsy wanderings. The details of this vagrancy are best learned in his *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, where we meet not simply the facts of his life, but also the confusion of dreams and fancies in the midst of which he wandered like a man lost on the mountains, with storm clouds under his feet hiding the familiar

earth. After a year of vagrancy and starvation he was found by his family and allowed to go to Oxford, where his career was marked by the most brilliant and erratic scholarship. When ready for a degree, in 1807, he passed his written tests successfully, but felt a sudden terror at the thought of the oral examination and disappeared from the university, never to return.

It was in Oxford that De Quincey began the use of opium, to relieve the pains of neuralgia, and the habit increased until he was an almost hopeless slave to the drug.

Only his extraordinary will power enabled him to break away from the habit, after some thirty years of misery. Some peculiarity of his delicate constitution enabled De Quincey to take enormous quantities of opium, enough to kill several ordinary men; and it was largely opium, working upon a sensitive imagination, which produced his gorgeous dreams, broken by intervals of weakness and profound depression. For twenty years he resided at Grasmere in the companionship of the Lake poets; and here, led by the loss of his small fortune, he began to write, with the idea of sup-



THOMAS DE QUINCEY

porting his family. In 1821 he published his first famous work, the *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, and for nearly forty years afterwards he wrote industriously, contributing to various magazines an astonishing number of essays on a great variety of subjects. Without thought of literary fame, he contributed these articles anonymously; but fortunately, in 1853, he began to collect his own works, and the last of fourteen volumes was published just after his death.

In 1830, led by his connection with *Blackwood's Magazine*, to which he was the chief contributor, De Quincey removed with his

family to Edinburgh, where his erratic genius and his singularly childlike ways produced enough amusing anecdotes to fill a volume. He would take a room in some place unknown to his friends and family; would live in it for a few years, until he had filled it, even to the bath tub, with books and with his own chaotic manuscripts, allowing no one to enter or disturb his den; and then, when the place became too crowded, he would lock the door and go away and take another lodging, where he repeated the same extraordinary performance. He died in Edinburgh in 1859. Like Lamb, he was a small, boyish figure, gentle, and elaborately courteous. Though excessively shy, and escaping as often as possible to solitude, he was nevertheless fond of society, and his wide knowledge and vivid imagination made his conversations almost as prized as those of his friend Coleridge.

Works. De Quincey's works may be divided into two general classes. The first includes his numerous critical articles, and the second his autobiographical sketches. All his works, it must be remembered, were contributed to various magazines, and were hastily collected just before his death. Hence the general impression of chaos which we get from reading them.

From a literary view point the most illuminating of De Quincey's critical works is his *Literary Reminiscences*. This contains brilliant appreciations of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Lamb, Shelley, Keats, Hazlitt, and Landor, as well as some interesting studies of the literary figures of the age preceding. Among the best of his brilliant critical essays are *On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth* (1823), which is admirably suited to show the man's critical genius, and *Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts* (1827), which reveals his grotesque humor. Other suggestive critical works, if one must choose among such a multitude, are his *Letters to a Young Man* (1823), *Joan of Arc* (1847), *The Revolt of the Tartars* (1840), and *The English Mail-Coach* (1849). In the last-named essay the "Dream Fugue" is one of the most imaginative of all his curious works.

Of De Quincey's autobiographical sketches the best known is his *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1821). This is only partly a record of opium dreams, and its chief interest lies in glimpses it gives us of De Quincey's own life and wanderings. This should be followed by *Suspiria de Profundis* (1845), which is chiefly a record of gloomy and terrible dreams produced by opiates. The most interesting parts of his *Suspiria*, showing De Quincey's marvelous insight into dreams, are those in which we are brought face to face with the strange feminine creations "Levana," "Madonna," "Our Lady of Sighs," and "Our Lady of Darkness." A series of nearly thirty articles which he collected in 1853, called *Autobiographic Sketches*, completes the revelation of the author's own life. Among his miscellaneous works may be mentioned, in order to show his wide range of subjects, *Klosterheim*, a novel, *Logic of Political Economy*, the *Essays on Style and Rhetoric*, *Philosophy of Herodotus*, and his articles on Goethe, Pope, Schiller, and Shakespeare which he contributed to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

De Quincey's style is a revelation of the beauty of the English language, and it profoundly influenced Ruskin and other prose writers of the Victorian Age. It has two chief faults, — diffuseness, which continually leads De Quincey away from his object, and triviality, which often makes him halt in the midst of a marvelous paragraph to make some light jest or witticism that has some humor but no mirth in it. Notwithstanding these faults, De Quincey's prose is still among the few supreme examples of style in our language. Though he was profoundly influenced by the seventeenth-century writers, he attempted definitely to create a new style which should combine the best elements of prose and poetry. In consequence, his prose works are often, like those of Milton, more imaginative and melodious than much of our poetry. He has been well called "the psychologist of style," and as such his works will never be popular; but to

**Confessions
of an Opium-
Eater, etc.**

**The Style of
De Quincey**

the few who can appreciate him he will always be an inspiration to better writing. One has a deeper respect for our English language and literature after reading him.

Secondary Writers of Romanticism. One has only to glance back over the authors we have been studying — Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Scott, Lamb, De Quincey — to realize the great change which swept over the life and literature of England in a single half century, under two influences which we now know as the French Revolution in history and the Romantic Movement in literature. In life men had rebelled against the too strict authority of state and society; in literature they rebelled even more vigorously against the bonds of classicism, which had sternly repressed a writer's ambition to follow his own ideals and to express them in his own way. Naturally such an age of revolution was essentially poetic, — only the Elizabethan Age surpasses it in this respect, — and it produced a large number of minor writers, who followed more or less closely the example of its great leaders. Among novelists we have Jane Austen, Frances Burney, Maria Edgeworth, Jane Porter, and Susan Ferrier, — all women, be it noted; among the poets, Campbell, Moore, Hogg ("the Ettrick Shepherd"), Mrs. Hemans, Heber, Keble, Hood, and "Ingoldsby" (Richard Barham); and among miscellaneous writers, Sidney Smith, "Christopher North" (John Wilson), Chalmers, Lockhart, Leigh Hunt, Hazlitt, Hallam, and Landor. Here is an astonishing variety of writers, and to consider all their claims to remembrance would of itself require a volume. Though these are generally classed as secondary writers, much of their work has claims to popularity, and some of it to permanence. Moore's *Irish Melodies*, Campbell's lyrics, Keble's *Christian Year*, and Jane Porter's *Thaddeus of Warsaw* and *Scottish Chiefs* have still a multitude of readers, where Keats, Lamb, and De Quincey are prized only by the cultured few; and Hallam's historical and critical works are perhaps better known than those of

Gibbon, who nevertheless occupies a larger place in our literature. Among all these writers we choose only two, Jane Austen and Walter Savage Landor, whose works indicate a period of transition from the Romantic to the Victorian Age.

JANE AUSTEN (1775-1817)

We have so lately rediscovered the charm and genius of this gifted young woman that she seems to be a novelist of yesterday, rather than the contemporary of Wordsworth and Coleridge; and few even of her readers realize that she did for the English novel precisely what the Lake poets did for English poetry, — she refined and simplified it, making it a true reflection of English life. Like the Lake poets, she met with scanty encouragement in her own generation. Her greatest novel, *Pride and Prejudice*, was finished in 1797, a year before the appearance of the famous *Lyrical Ballads* of Wordsworth and Coleridge; but while the latter book was published and found a few appreciative readers, the manuscript of this wonderful novel went begging for sixteen years before it found a publisher. As Wordsworth began with the deliberate purpose of making poetry natural and truthful, so Miss Austen appears to have begun writing with the idea of presenting the life of English country society exactly as it was, in opposition to the romantic extravagance of Mrs. Radcliffe and her school. But there was this difference, — that Miss Austen had in large measure the saving gift of humor, which Wordsworth sadly lacked. Maria Edgeworth, at the same time, set a sane and excellent example in her tales of Irish life, *The Absentee* and *Castle Rackrent*; and Miss Austen followed up the advantage with at least six works, which have grown steadily in value until we place them gladly in the first rank of our novels of common life. It is not simply for her exquisite charm, therefore, that we admire her, but also for her influence in bringing our novels back to their true place as an expression of human life. It is due partly, at least, to

her influence that a multitude of readers were ready to appreciate Mrs. Gaskell's *Cranford*, and the powerful and enduring work of George Eliot.

Life. Jane Austen's life gives little opportunity for the biographer, unless, perchance, he has something of her own power to show the beauty and charm of commonplace things. She was the seventh child of Rev. George Austen, rector of Steventon, and was born in the parsonage of the village in 1775. With her sisters she was educated at home, and passed her life very quietly, cheerfully, in the doing of small domestic duties, to which love lent the magic lamp that makes all things beautiful. She began to write at an early age, and seems to have done her work on a little table in the family sitting room, in the midst of the family life. When a visitor entered, she would throw a paper or a piece of sewing over her work, and she modestly refused to be known as the author of novels which we now count among our treasured possessions. With the publishers she had little success. *Pride and Prejudice* went begging, as we have said, for sixteen years; and *Northanger Abbey* (1798) was sold for a trivial sum to a publisher, who laid it aside and forgot it, until the appearance and moderate success of *Sense and Sensibility* in 1811. Then, after keeping the manuscript some fifteen years, he sold it back to the family, who found another publisher.

An anonymous article in the *Quarterly Review*, following the appearance of *Emma* in 1815, full of generous appreciation of the charm of the new writer, was the beginning of Jane Austen's fame; and it is only within a few years that we have learned that the friendly and discerning critic was Walter Scott. He continued to be her admirer until her early death; but these two, the greatest writers of fiction in their age, were never brought together. Both were home-loving people, and Miss Austen especially was averse to publicity and popularity. She died, quietly as she had lived, at Winchester, in 1817, and was buried in the cathedral. She was a bright, attractive little woman, whose sunny qualities are unconsciously reflected in all her books.

Works. Very few English writers ever had so narrow a field of work as Jane Austen. Like the French novelists, whose success seems to lie in choosing the tiny field that they know best, her works have an exquisite perfection that

is lacking in most of our writers of fiction. With the exception of an occasional visit to the watering place of Bath, her whole life was spent in small country parishes, whose simple country people became the characters of her novels. Her brothers were in the navy, and so naval officers furnish the only exciting elements in her stories; but even these alleged heroes lay aside their imposing martial ways and act like themselves and other people. Such was her literary field, in which the chief duties were of the household, the chief pleasures in country gatherings, and the chief interests in matrimony. Life, with its mighty interests, its passions, ambitions, and tragic struggles, swept by like a great river; while the secluded interests of a country parish went round and round quietly, like an eddy behind a sheltering rock. We can easily understand, therefore, the limitations of Jane Austen; but within her own field she is unequaled. Her characters are absolutely true to life, and all her work has the perfection of a delicate miniature painting. The most widely read of her novels is *Pride and Prejudice*; but three others, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Emma*, and *Mansfield Park*, have slowly won their way to the front rank of fiction. From a literary view point *Northanger Abbey* is perhaps the best; for in it we find that touch of humor and delicate satire with which this gentle little woman combated the grotesque popular novels of the *Udolpho* type. Reading any of these works, one is inclined to accept the hearty indorsement of Sir Walter Scott: "That young lady has a talent for describing the involvements and feelings and characters of ordinary life which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with. The big bowwow strain I can do myself, like any now going; but the exquisite touch which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting from the truth of the description and the sentiment, is denied to me. What a pity such a gifted creature died so early!"